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SUBJECT: ST.VINCENT AND THE GRENADINES - INFORMATION ON CHILD LABOR
AND FORCED LABOR FOR DOL CONGRESSIONAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

REF: 09 SECSTATE 131997

¶1. Summary: Child labor is not a significant issue in St. Vincent. Post has found no evidence of exploitative child labor or forced labor in St. Vincent, though there is evidence that minors continue to work in the cultivation of marijuana. The law prohibits forced or compulsory labor, including by children, and there were no reports that such practices occurred. The law sets the minimum working age at 16, and workers may receive a national insurance card at that age. The Ministry of Labor monitored and enforced this provision, and employers generally respected it in practice. There were five labor officers in the labor inspectorate with responsibility for monitoring all labor issues and complaints. The ministry reported no child labor problems. There are some children working on family-owned banana plantations, particularly during harvest time, or in family-owned cottage industries. The government operated Youth Empowerment, which provided training and increased job opportunities by employing young persons in government ministries for up to one year. There was a growing problem of young people dropping out of school and becoming involved in the drug trade. Some children, including children as young as 14, reportedly were working in the marijuana fields common in the northern part of the country. The government tackled this problem by opening a number of new schools and providing additional educational opportunities to young people. The government has also launched a campaign to address the need to provide employment opportunities to young people to keep them from becoming involved in the drug trade. End Summary

Some isolated incidents of children possibly involved in the drug trade

¶2. Although exploitive child labor is not a pervasive problem in St. Vincent, there were reports of minors becoming involved in the drug trade. Police investigated one case involving the possible forced labor of minor(s) in cannabis production. Police officials determined that the minor(s) in question were working voluntarily in the cultivation of marijuana, but claimed to be exploited to avoid being charged with drug-related offenses.

¶2. Tasking I. Use of Forced or Child Labor

a. Type of Goods: None, no cases of such production were reported

in St. Vincent.

b. Type of Exploitation Found in the Production of the Goods: No reported cases.

c. Sources of Information and Years: No reported cases.

d. Narrative Description: There were no reported incidents of child or forced labor in St. Vincent during the last calendar year.

e. Prevalence: Although child labor as defined under the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labor is not occurring in St. Vincent according to the Labor Commissioner's office, there were some children who were employed after school and on the weekends. Helping out in the family business or farm is quite common in St. Vincent. But, children attend school until age 16 and school truancy officers follow up with delinquent children to ensure that they attend school.

f. Efforts Designed to Combat Forced Labor of Adults or children in the Production of Goods: The Ministry of Education has programs to address the needs of children at risk of dropping out of school.

13. Tasking II.

a. Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of Exploitive Child Labor:

(1) In what sectors (not related to the production of goods) were children involved in exploitive labor? No reported cases

(2) Did the Government collect or publish data on exploitive child labor? If so, will the government provide the data set to DOL for further analysis? No reported cases.

b. Laws and Regulations:

(1) What new laws or regulations were enacted in regard to exploitive child labor over the past year? Were the changes improvements in the legal and regulatory framework? None.

(2) Is the country's legal and regulatory framework adequate for addressing exploitive child labor? Child labor cases are dealt with by the Ministry of Labor's labor inspector's office. They are prepared to deal with any such cases reported to them, but have not received any reports in the last few years.

c. Institutions and Mechanism for Enforcement:

(1) What agency/agencies was/were responsible for the enforcement of laws relating to hazardous child labor? The Ministry of Labor has the prime responsibility along with the Ministry of Social Development, which handles cases of suspected child abuse. But there were no reported cases.

(2) If multiple agencies were responsible for enforcement, was there mechanisms for exchanging information? Assess their effectiveness. The Ministry of Labor would address the issue of child labor. Did the country maintain a mechanism for making complaints about hazardous child labor violations? If so, how many complaints were received in the reporting period? No complaints were received.

(3) What amount of funding was provided to agencies responsible for inspections? Was this amount adequate? Did inspectors have sufficient office facilities, transportation, fuel, and other necessities to carry out inspections? Funding is adequate.

(4) How many inspectors did the government employ? Was the number of inspectors adequate? The government of St. Vincent has five labor inspectors, who cover the gamete of possible labor violations, including child labor. The number of inspectors is not adequate but the government is hiring more inspectors. The labor commissioner reported to LABOFF that they had not seen any child labor violations in recent years.

(5) How many inspections involving child labor were carried out? If possible, please provide breakdown of complaint-driven versus random, government-initiated inspections. Were inspections carried out in sectors in which children work? Was the number of inspections adequate? There were no inspections conducted as there were no reported cases.

(6) How many children were removed/assisted as a result of inspections? Were these children actually provided or referred for services as a result (as opposed to simply fired)? There were no inspections and no removals as a result of inspections.

(7) How many child labor cases or "prosecutions" were opened? No cases were opened.

(8) How many child labor cases were closed or resolved? No cases reported.

(9) How many violations were found or "convictions" reached? No violations were found.

(10) What is the average length of time it took to resolve child labor cases? Unclear as there have been no cases reported.

(11) In cases in which violations were found, were penalties actually applied, either through fines paid or jail sentence served? Did such sentences meet penalties established in the law? No cases were reported.

(12) Did the experience regarding questions 7 through 10 above reflect a commitment to combat exploitative child labor? Yes, the labor ministry is committed to ensuring that child labor does not become a problem.

(13) Did government offer any training for investigators or others responsible for enforcement? If so, what (if any) impact have these trainings had? No special programs have been set up. No special programs have been set up.

2C, Section II: Forced Child Labor:

(1) What agency/agencies was/were responsible for the enforcement of laws relating to forced child labor? The Ministry of Labor would take the lead; the Ministry of Social Development takes the lead on child abuse cases.

(2) If multiple agencies were responsible for enforcement, were there mechanism for exchanging information? Assess their effectiveness. Although there were no cases reported, it appears that the Ministry of Labor is prepared to deal with Child labor cases.

(3) Did the country maintain a mechanism for making complaints about forced child labor violations? If so, how many complaints were received in the reporting period? There is no separate reporting mechanism. The Ministry takes action if they receive a complaint from the public. Police investigated one case

involving possible labor of minors in marijuana cultivation and deemed it to lack merit.

(4) What amount of funding was provided to agencies responsible for inspections? Was this amount adequate? Did inspectors have sufficient office facilities, transportation, fuel, and other necessities to carry out inspections? Funding appears adequate.

(5) How many inspectors did the government employ? Was the number of inspectors adequate? The Ministry of Labor has 5 inspectors who cover the whole range of possible labor violations, including Child Labor. The number of inspectors is inadequate to fully inspect all potential worksites.

(6) How many inspections involving child labor were carried out? If possible, please provide breakdown of complaint-driven versus random, government-initiated inspections. Were inspections carried out in sectors in which children work? Was the number of inspections adequate? No inspections were carried out.

(7) How many children were removed/assisted as a result of inspections? Were these children actually provided or referred for services as a result (as opposed to simply fired)? No children were rescued as there were no cases opened.

(8) How many child labor cases or "prosecutions" were opened? None reported.

(9) How many child labor cases were closed or resolved? None reported.

(10) How many violations were found or "convictions" reached? No violations were reported.

(11) What is the average length of time it took to resolve child labor cases? No cases were reported.

(12) In cases in which violations were found, were penalties actually applied, either through fines paid or jail sentence served? Did such sentences meet penalties established in the law? No cases were reported.

(13) Did the experience regarding questions 7 through 10 above reflect a commitment to combat exploitative child labor? Yes, the government seems committed to ensuring that Child Labor does not become a problem.

(14) Did government offer any training for investigators or others responsible for enforcement? If so, what (if any) impact have these trainings had? No particular training was offered, other than an ILO sponsored workshop a few years ago when St. Vincent signed the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labor.

d. Institutional Mechanism for Effective Enforcement:

2D, Section I: Child Trafficking:

(1) Did the country have agencies or personnel dedicated to enforcement of child trafficking? How many investigators/social workers/dedicated police officers did the government employ to conduct investigations? If there were no dedicated agencies or personnel, provide an estimate of the number of people who were responsible for such investigations. Was the number of investigators adequate? Child trafficking is not dealt with by special inspectors or personnel. Police would take the lead in any trafficking investigation. There were no reported cases.

(2) How much funding was provided agencies responsible for investigating child trafficking? Was this amount adequate? Did investigators have sufficient office facilities, transportation, fuel, and other necessities to carry out investigations? There is no special funding for Child Trafficking. But the police appear to have sufficient funding.

(3) Did the country maintain a hotline or other mechanism for reporting child trafficking violations? If so, how many complaints were received in the reporting period? No hotline exists for child trafficking cases.

(4) How many investigations were opened in regard to child

trafficking? Was the number of investigations adequate? No inspections took place.

(5) How many children were rescued as a result? No inspections took place.

(6) How many arrests were made or other kinds of prosecutions carried out? No arrests were made.

(7) How many cases were closed or resolved? No cases were reported.

(8) How many convictions? No convictions were reported.

(9) Did sentences imposed meet standards established in the legal framework? No convictions were reported. Child trafficking is not a separate offense from trafficking in general.

(10) Were sentences imposed actually served? No arrests were made.

(11) What is the average length of time it takes to resolve cases of child trafficking? No cases were reported.

(12) Did the government offer any training for investigators or others responsible for enforcement of child trafficking? If so what was the impact (if any) of these trainings? No special programs exist.

(13) If the country experienced armed conflict during the reporting period or in the recent past involving the use of child soldiers, what actions were taken to penalize those responsible? Were these actions adequate or meaningful given the situation? There has been no armed conflict in recent decades.

2D, Section II: Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC):

(1) Did the country have agencies or personnel dedicated to enforcement of CSEC? How many investigators/social workers/dedicated police officers did the government employ to conduct investigations? If there were no dedicated agencies or personnel, provide an estimate of the number of people who were responsible for such investigations. Was the number of investigators adequate? There is no special enforcement agency. Police would refer suspected cases of trafficking to the Ministry of Social Development which oversees child abuse cases. There are no reports of CSEC in St. Vincent. There may be some isolated incidences of underage prostitution as prostitution does occur in St. Vincent. Many of the commercial sex workers are from other islands. There is no evidence of organized trafficking of women or children for commercial sex work.

(2) How much funding was provided agencies responsible for investigating CSEC? Was this amount adequate? Did investigators

have sufficient office facilities, transportation, fuel, and other necessities to carry out investigations? No dedicated funding exists. Funding for police seems adequate.

(3) Did the country maintain a hotline or other mechanism for reporting CSEC violations? If so, how many complaints were received in the reporting period? No hotline exists.

(4) How many investigations were opened in regard to CSEC? Was the number of investigations adequate? No cases were reported.

(5) How many children were rescued as a result? No cases were reported.

(6) How many arrests were made or other kinds of prosecutions carried out? No cases were reported.

(7) How many cases were closed or resolved? No cases were reported.

(8) How many convictions? No cases were reported.

(9) Did sentences imposed meet standards established in the legal framework? No cases were reported.

(10) Were sentences imposed actually served? No cases were reported.

(11) What is the average length of time it takes to resolve cases of CSEC? No cases were reported.

(12) Did the government offer any training for investigators or others responsible for enforcement of CSEC? If so what was the impact (if any) of these trainings? No special program exists.

(13) If the country experienced armed conflict during the reporting period or in the recent past involving the use of child soldiers, what actions were taken to penalize those responsible? Were these actions adequate or meaningful given the situation? No armed conflict occurred in recent decades.

2D, Section III: Use of Children in Illicit Activities:

(1) Did the country have agencies or personnel dedicated to enforcement of the use of children in illicit activities? How many investigators/social workers/dedicated police officers did the government employ to conduct investigations? If there were no dedicated agencies or personnel, provide an estimate of the number of people who were responsible for such investigations. Was the number of investigators adequate? There is no dedicated agency

devoted to such investigations. The Police would refer suspected child abuse cases to the Ministry of Family and Gender Affairs for follow up.

(2) How much funding was provided agencies responsible for investigating the use of children in illicit activities? Was this amount adequate? Did investigators have sufficient office facilities, transportation, fuel, and other necessities to carry out investigations? There is adequate funding.

(3) Did the country maintain a hotline or other mechanism for reporting the use of children in illicit activities violations? If so, how many complaints were received in the reporting period? No separate hotline exists.

(4) How many investigations were opened in regard to the use of children in illicit activities? Was the number of investigations adequate? Police investigated one potential case of minors working in marijuana cultivation. This was adequate for the reporting period.

(5) How many children were rescued as a result? No cases were reported.

(6) How many arrests were made or other kinds of prosecutions carried out? No cases were reported.

(7) How many cases were closed or resolved? No cases were reported.

(8) How many convictions? No cases were reported.

(9) Did sentences imposed meet standards established in the legal framework? No cases were reported.

(10) Were sentences imposed actually served? No cases were reported.

(11) What is the average length of time it takes to resolve cases of the use of children in illicit activities? No cases were reported.

(12) Did the government offer any training for investigators or others responsible for enforcement of the use of children in

illicit activities? If so what was the impact (if any) of these trainings? No special program exists.

(13) If the country experienced armed conflict during the reporting period or in the recent past involving the use of child soldiers, what actions were taken to penalize those responsible? Were these actions adequate or meaningful given the situation? No armed conflict during the last few decades.

e. Government Policies on Child Labor:

(1) Did the government have a policy or plan that specifically addresses exploitative child labor? Please describe. The government does not have an exploitative child labor action plan.

(2) Did the country incorporate exploitative child labor specifically as an issue to be addressed in poverty reduction, development, educational or other social policies, such as Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, etc? Please describe. The government does not have an exploitative child labor plan.

(3) Did the government provide funding to the plans described above? Please describe the amount and whether it was sufficient to carry out the planned activities. No funds were dedicated to these programs.

(4) Did the government provide non-monetary support to child labor plans. Please describe. No such provisions were made.

(5) Provide any additional information about the status and effectiveness of the government's policies or plans during the reporting period in regard to exploitative child labor. The government is prepared to address the issue if it becomes a problem.

(6) Did the government participate in any commissions or task forces regarding exploitative child labor? Was the commission active and/or effective? No special task force has been set up.

(7) Did the government sign a bilateral, regional, or international agreement to combat trafficking? The Government has ratified the applicable international agreements on trafficking and the ILO convention on the worst forms of child labor.

f. Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent Child Labor:

(1) Did the government implement any programs specifically to address the worst forms of child labor? No special programs have been enacted.

(2) Did the country incorporate child labor specifically as an issue to be addressed in poverty reduction, development, educational or other social programs, such as conditional cash transfer programs or eligibility for school meals, etc? Please describe. No such programs exist.

(3) Did the government provide funding to the programs

described above? If so, describe the amount and whether it was sufficient to carry out the planned activities. No such programs

exist.

(4) Did the government provide non-monetary support to child labor programs? Please describe. No such programs exist.

(5) Provide any additional information about the status and effectiveness of the government's activities in relation to the programs described above. and describe and assess the effectiveness of these services. No such programs exist.

(6) If the government signed one or more bilateral, regional or international agreements to combat trafficking, what steps did it take to implement such agreements? Did the agreements result in tangible improvements? If so, please describe. The government has signed the ILO Convention on the Worst Forms of Child Labor and has taken steps to ensure that it is compliance.

g. Continual Progress:

St. Vincent does not have significant child labor problems. St. Vincent continues to have a problem with what appears to be voluntary labor by minors in marijuana cultivation. The government has taken and is taking measures to address this issue and keep minors in school.

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